

# NETHER CONTLAW, PETERCULTER ABERDEEN



## - Archaeological Watching Brief -

Carried out 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013  
by  
**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2013-32**

by  
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1. Background

- 1.1 A proposal for the erection of a new equestrian building at Nether Contlaw was approved, subject to a planning condition (Planning Application No: P130879) stipulating that no work shall take place until the applicant has secured the initiation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by Aberdeen City Council. The condition states that: ‘No development shall take place within the area indicated (in this case the area of the whole development) until the applicant has secured the implementation of a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. The programme of archaeological work will include all necessary post-excavation and publication work’.

In consultation with the Archaeological Service, Aberdeen City Council, it was deemed that an archaeological watching brief, to be conducted during site soil clearance, would be an appropriate response.

- 1.2 The Conditions were applied in the context of PAN (Planning Advise Note) 2/2011, SPP and SHEP.

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1.3 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Rapid Project Development Ltd, on behalf of their client, to undertake the work which was carried out 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013

## 2. THE SITE

2.1 Nether Contlaw farm is located a short distance to the N of Peterculter on the E side of the B979 [NGR: 8413 0257; NMRS No: NJ80SW 63; Parish: Peterculter].

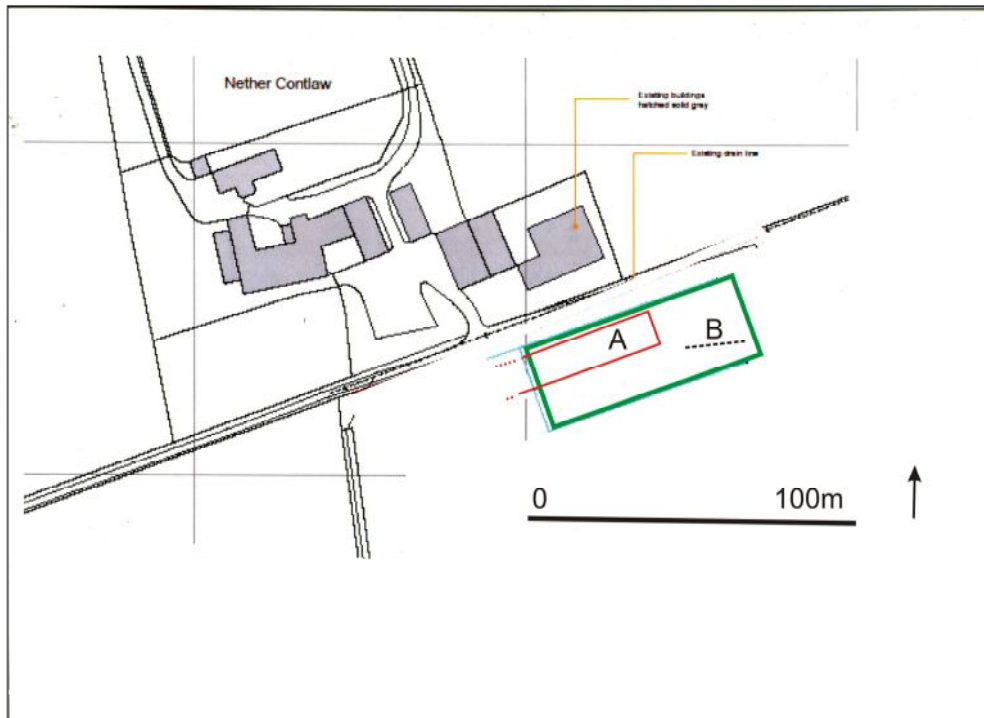
2.2 Immediately N of the farm, at Beans Hill, extensive traces of settlement and land-use dating from the prehistoric period to the 19<sup>th</sup> century are visible. These include a cup-marked stone, hut circles, small cairns, rig-and-furrow and croft buildings.

2.3 Peterculter was a thriving medieval settlement and the lands of Nether Contlaw are named in Aberdeenshire Sheriff Court Records for 1595-6. It is thought likely that the farm is a descendant of a medieval fermtoun at or near this same site.

A single sherd of 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century medieval pottery was recorded during a watching brief in 2009 on the site of an agricultural building in close proximity to the location of the current proposal [Murray, 2009].

## 3. The Watching Brief

3.1 The area stripped of soil measured c. 68m (E-W) x 28m (N-S), which is greater than the footprint of the actual new equestrian building [NGR: NJ 84244 02535 at centre of site]. Sometime in the recent past an area 38m x 10m in the NW of the site had been excavated to a depth in excess of 1m and was used for general purposes and, consequentially, was not observed. The soil strip was carried out using a 20 tonne full-slew mechanical digger with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Where necessary areas were cleaned by hand and features recorded.



**Illus 1: Plan of Site, showing 'A' (green outline) - area previously excavated and 'B' - stone field drain**



**Illus 2: View, looking E, of site with area previously excavated on LHS**



**Illus 3: View of site, looking NW**

- 3.2 The area of the site had been in crop and the depth of topsoil removed varied between 340 - 400mm. The topsoil overlay beige-yellow sandy natural with stone mixed through. A stone field drain was located in the SE of the site and ran for c.18m E – W across the site.



**Illus 4: View of stone field drain, looking E**

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3.3 With the exception of the field drain, no other features were observed cutting into the natural.

3.4 No archaeological features or finds were evident.

## 4. Results

4.1 With the exception of a stone field drain, no archaeological features or finds were evident during the soil strip.

## 5. References

Murray, J C, 2009a, *Nether Contlaw, Peterculter, Aberdeen – Archaeological Watching Brief Carried out 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009*, MAS 2009-16, Archive Report, Aberdeen.

Murray, J C, 2009b *Nether Contlaw, Peterculter, DES 10,14*

## Appendix 1

### **Catalogue of Digital Photographs (Supplied to Archive)**

1-2	General views of E end of site, looking NE
3-5	Views, looking E, of earlier cut into the site
6	Detail of E end of site, looking SE
7-14	Views of site, looking NW towards steading buildings
15-16	Detail of stone field drain, looking E